

What is claimed is:

1 1. An approval authority registration system which
2 comprises terminals, a database, and a database management
3 apparatus interconnected via a network and registers, with the
4 database, approval relation information which shows
5 relationships between approval-authorized persons and approval
6 object persons who are both users of the approval authority
7 registration system, wherein

8 the database management apparatus includes:

9 a receiving unit operable to receive, from a user via a
10 terminal, a registration request requesting registration of a
11 piece of approval relation information;

12 a judging unit operable to judge whether the user who input
13 the registration request matches either an approval-authorized
14 person or an approval object person specified in the requested
15 piece of approval relation information; and

16 a registration unit operable to register the piece of
17 approval relation information with the database if the judging
18 unit judges that the user matches neither the specified
19 approval-authorized person nor the specified approval object
20 person.

1 2. The approval authority registration system of Claim
2 1, wherein

3 the database includes an attribute database with which
4 user attribute information showing attributes of the users is
5 registered,

6 the judging unit further judges whether an attribute of

7 the user who input the registration request satisfies a
8 predetermined condition by referring to the user attribute
9 information, and

10 the registration unit registers the piece of approval
11 relation information with the database if the judging unit judges
12 that the attribute of the user satisfies the predetermined
13 condition.

1 3. The approval authority registration system of Claim
2 2, wherein

3 the judging unit further judges whether an attribute of
4 the specified approval-authorized person satisfies a
5 predetermined condition by referring to the user attribute
6 information, and

7 the registration unit registers the piece of approval
8 relation information with the database if the judging unit judges
9 that the attribute of the specified approval-authorized person
10 satisfies the predetermined condition.

1 4. The approval authority registration system of Claim
2 1, wherein

3 the receiving unit further receives, from a user via a
4 terminal, a registration request requesting registration of a
5 piece of approval relation information specifying a proxy
6 approval-authorized person,

7 the judging unit further judges whether the user who input
8 the latter registration request matches an approval-authorized
9 person indicated by a piece of approval relation information

10 that has already been registered with the database, and
11 the registration unit registers the latter piece of
12 approval relation information with the database if the judging
13 unit judges that the user who input the latter registration
14 request matches the approval-authorized person indicated by the
15 already-registered piece of approval relation information.

1 5. The approval authority registration system of Claim
2 4, wherein

3 each piece of approval relation information further
4 includes (i) effective period information that indicates an
5 effective period of the piece of approval relation information
6 and (ii) user information that indicates a user who input a
7 registration request requesting registration of the piece of
8 approval relation information, and

9 the database management apparatus further includes:

10 a storage unit operable to store a list of notification
11 destinations respectively corresponding to the users of the
12 approval authority registration system;

13 a monitoring unit operable to monitor, at regular intervals,
14 effective period information included in one or more pieces of
15 approval relation information which, among pieces of approval
16 relation information having been registered with the database,
17 specify proxy approval-authorized persons, and operable to judge
18 whether any of the one or more pieces of approval relation
19 information has an effective period end date that is within a
20 predetermined range of days including a day on which the
21 monitoring unit is currently monitoring; and

22 a notification unit operable to, if the monitoring unit
23 judges that one of the one or more pieces of approval relation
24 information has an effective period end date that is within the
25 predetermined range of days, notifies a notification destination
26 corresponding to a user indicated by the one of the one or more
27 pieces of approval relation information, of the judgment result
28 by the monitoring unit.

1 6. The approval authority registration system of Claim
2 1, wherein

3 the registration unit further registers a piece of update
4 history information with the database each time a user newly
5 registers or updates a piece of approval relation information,

6 the receiving unit further receives, from a user via a
7 terminal, a request to obtain a piece of update history
8 information, and

9 the database management apparatus further includes
10 a history information distribution unit operable to read
11 the requested piece of update history information from the
12 database and distribute the read piece of update history
13 information to the terminal.

1 7. The approval authority registration system of Claim
2 1, wherein

3 the receiving unit further receives an approval request
4 from a user via a terminal, and

5 the database management apparatus further includes:
6 an identifying unit operable to identify, by referring

7 to approval relation information registered with the database,
8 an approval-authorized person to whom the user, as an approval
9 object person, corresponds;

10 an approval request distribution unit operable to
11 distribute the received approval request to the identified
12 approval-authorized person;

13 an obtaining unit operable to obtain approval information,
14 which indicates an approval or a denial by the
15 approval-authorized person in response to the approval request,
16 from the approval-authorized person via a terminal; and

17 an approval information distribution unit operable to
18 distribute the obtained approval information to the user who
19 sent the approval request.

1 8. The approval authority registration system of Claim
2 1, wherein

3 each piece of approval relation information to be
4 registered and having been registered with the database includes
5 responsible person classification information that indicates
6 whether an approval-authorized person specified in the piece
7 of approval relation information is a responsible person or proxy,
8 wherein

9 if the receiving unit receives a piece of approval relation
10 information with responsible person classification information
11 indicating that an approval-authorized person is proxy, the
12 judging unit judges whether the user who input a registration
13 request requesting registration of the received piece of approval
14 relation information matches a responsible person indicated by

15 a piece of approval relation information that has already been
16 registered with the database, and
17 the registration unit registers the received piece of
18 approval relation information with the database if the judging
19 unit judges that the user who input the registration request
20 matches the responsible person indicated by the
21 already-registered piece of approval relation information.

1 9. An approval authority registration system which
2 comprises terminals and a database management apparatus
3 interconnected via a network and registers approval relation
4 information showing relationships between approval-authorized
5 persons and approval object persons who are both users of the
6 approval authority registration system, wherein
7 the database management apparatus includes:
8 a database that stores, in advance, registered
9 approval-authorized person identification information for
10 identifying registered approval-authorized persons among the
11 users;
12 a receiving unit operable to receive, from a user via a
13 terminal, a registration request that requests to newly register
14 a piece of proxy approval relation information that specifies
15 (i) one of the users as a proxy approval-authorized person and
16 (ii) a different one of the users as a proxy approval object
17 person;
18 a judging unit operable to judge whether the user who input
19 the registration request has been registered as an
20 approval-authorized person, by referring to the registered

21 approval-authorized person identification information stored
22 in the database;

23 a registration unit operable to newly register (i) the
24 piece of proxy approval relation information and (ii) a piece
25 of proxy approval relation registration history information that
26 shows a history of registrations of proxy approval relation
27 information by the user, with the database if the judging unit
28 judges that the user has been registered as an
29 approval-authorized person; and

30 a history information distribution unit operable to, if
31 the receiving unit receives a request to obtain the piece of
32 proxy approval relation registration history information from
33 a user via a terminal, distribute the piece of proxy approval
34 relation registration history information to the terminal via
35 which the request to obtain the piece of proxy approval relation
36 registration history information was received.

1 10. An approval authority registration method for use
2 in a database management apparatus comprised in an approval
3 authority registration system which comprises terminals and a
4 database as well, and registers approval relation information
5 with the database, wherein the database management apparatus,
6 the terminals, and the database are interconnected via a network,
7 the approval relation information showing relationships between
8 approval-authorized persons and approval object persons who are
9 both users of the approval authority registration system, wherein
10 the approval authority registration method includes:
11 a receiving step for receiving, from a user via a terminal,

12 a registration request requesting registration of a piece of
13 approval relation information;

14 a judging step for judging whether the user who input the
15 registration request matches either an approval-authorized
16 person or an approval object person specified in the requested
17 piece of approval relation information; and

18 a registration step for registering the piece of approval
19 relation information with the database if the judging unit judges
20 that the user matches neither the specified approval-authorized
21 person nor the specified approval object person.

22

1 11. An approval authority registration program for use
2 in a database management apparatus comprised in an approval
3 authority registration system which comprises terminals and a
4 database as well, and registers approval relation information
5 with the database, wherein the database management apparatus,
6 the terminals, and the database are interconnected via a network,
7 the approval relation information showing relationships between
8 approval-authorized persons and approval object persons who are
9 both users of the approval authority registration system, wherein

10 the approval authority registration program includes:

11 a receiving step for receiving, from a user via a terminal,
12 a registration request requesting registration of a piece of
13 approval relation information;

14 a judging step for judging whether the user who input the
15 registration request matches either an approval-authorized
16 person or an approval object person specified in the requested

17 piece of approval relation information; and
18 a registration step for registering the piece of approval
19 relation information with the database if the judging unit judges
20 that the user matches neither the specified approval-authorized
21 person nor the specified approval object person.

1 12. A computer-readable recording medium recording
2 therein an approval authority registration program for use in
3 a database management apparatus comprised in an approval
4 authority registration system which comprises terminals and a
5 database as well, and registers approval relation information
6 with the database, wherein the database management apparatus,
7 the terminals, and the database are interconnected via a network,
8 the approval relation information showing relationships between
9 approval-authorized persons and approval object persons who are
10 both users of the approval authority registration system, wherein
11 the approval authority registration program includes:
12 a receiving step for receiving, from a user via a terminal,
13 a registration request requesting registration of a piece of
14 approval relation information;
15 a judging step for judging whether the user who input the
16 registration request matches either an approval-authorized
17 person or an approval object person specified in the requested
18 piece of approval relation information; and
19 a registration step for registering the piece of approval
20 relation information with the database if the judging unit judges
21 that the user matches neither the specified approval-authorized
22 person nor the specified approval object person.